[Vol. 1.] THE [No. 15.]

WEEKLY VISITANT.

"OURS ARE THE PLANS OF FAIR DELIGHTFUL PEACE,
"UNWARP'D BY PARTY RAGE, TO LIVE LIKE BROTHERS."

SALEM—SATURDAY EVENING, APRIL 12, 1806.

ORIGINAL PAPERS.

FOR THE WEEKLY VISITANT.

ON IGNORANCE.

The opportunities in the present age for acquiring knowledge, are far greater and more numerous, than have been offered by any preceding period. Almost all the governments of the civilized world, are, in a greater or less degree, the friends of learning and science, and they find, that as knowledge is diffused among their subjects, the industry, wealth, and of course the power of the nations are increased. This has more than balanced in the minds of sovereigns, the checks which knowledge has opposed to the exercise of absolute power, and they have consulted their true interests in establishing schools, academies, and universities, for the instruction of their subjects. These advantages have been improved to a very great degree, by mankind, but still a far greater proportion are in a state of unpardonable ignorance. It is unpardonable, because it results from the negligence of the people themselves, and not from obstructions thrown in the way of improvement.

The evils which result from ignorance, are so numerous as to make it the duty of every man to inform himself to the utmost of his power. Ignorant people are easily imposed on, and whether a tale that is told them be marvellous and absolutely incredible to well informed minds, or whether it be rational and worthy of belief, they equally credit it; or, if any preference be given, it is to that which is most marvellous. It is impossible to impose so easily on well informed minds. They are acquainted with the natural course of things, and any thing contrary to that course, they refuse to credit.

The people of this country are peculiarly favored with facilities for the acquirement of knowledge. Here it is at every persons option, whether to improve themselves, or to remain in a state of ignorance, and be subject to those evils which result from it. No matter what their occupation is, if they have the inclination they can always find the time, for reading and otherwise advancing themselves. Let them devote but a small part of that time and money which is expended in idleness, (say no more of it,) to this object, and we should see a very different kind of people.

Some philosophers have seriously maintained, that a state of ignorance is preferable to a state of error. How far these men carry the meaning of the word ignorance, I cannot say; but if they mean an ignorance of every thing, it must be immediately perceived that it is false, and in any other extent, ignorance and error are very much the same; or rather error is the effect of ignorance. It is believing that to be true which is false, that constitutes er-

ror. It is almost impossible for men to progress in knowledge without frequently being in error, as they are not acquainted with all the relations of one thing to another, and must, of course, in reasoning draw false conclusions. But because we may be frequently mistaken, it is no reason why we should remain in a state almost of brutality. Our errors that we receive in this way, will seldom essentially affect our happiness, and by keeping our minds open to conviction, we finally get rid of them.

BARCA.

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FOR THE WEEKLY VISITANT.

THE USEFULNESS OF THE HOE.

AFTER THE MANNER OF *****.

In the early stages of the world, when the earth produced her fruits spontaneously, and when a scanty people ranged over immense fields, the important art of hoeing could have been but little known. But as the offspring of Adam multiplied, when they begun to congregate in clans, and to discover some degree of civilization, and after the richness of the soil was changed to aridity and barrenness, ingenuity was taxed to procure a support. This necessity of forcing the earth to impart her wealth, probably originated the hoe; that useful and important instrument of husbandry, without whose assistance our gardens would be over-run by noxious and deleterious weeds, and be hideous from deformity. It is natural to suppose this implement was not brought to its present degree of perfection by its first inventor, but that it required the exertions of the philosophers of successive ages to make it such by slow degrees of improvement.

An ingenious author, whose name is immortalized by his works, has said, that if the use of iron was to be forgotten, men would immediately return to their original state of savageness. An alarming truth! but at the same time a high encomium upon the subject of our essay. For iron is a necessary and principal ingredient in its composition. And indeed, a little reflection will convince any man of the truth of this assertion. For we shall of course find many of the moral virtues, which distinguish civilized from savage nations more clearly than their dress, are best learned at the hoe.

Patience and perseverence are requisite in every undertaking, whence honor and profit can be derived. Nothing can withstand their united attack.—They will raise nations as well as individuals from the lowest point of humility to the pinnacle of glory and grandeur. Like time, they will sap the foundation of mightiest monarchies, alter the course of rivers, dry up oceans, and cut turnpike roads through the centre to the antipodes. This enterprizing and efficient spirit is generated at the hoe. We plant fields of corn. It springs up and flourishes; but the floods descend, and while they water its roots they lay them bare. This calls forth the energy and hoe of the farmer. He can scarcely reach the end of his field with his eye; but he resolutely attempts the work. The mounds of earth are placed round the pedicles. He sees how much he has done; this encourages him to persevere. He conquers and subdues. Autumn advances and remunerates his toil with a rich harvest of golden fruit. Like a conqueror of a more baneful kind, he exclaims in the fulness of his joy, *Veni, vidi, vici.* The same spirit accompanies him in all his employments, increasing with their magnitude.

Humility, so often recommended, by pride from the pulpit, as one of the

most christian virtues, is constantly practised at the hoe. Man is a worm, and all the children of men are but worms. In our hoeing exercitations we are constantly turning up these emblems of human insignificancy. We study and examine them, and are instantly struck with the resemblance. We see an insect of a "frail and feverish being" creeping on its belly, twisting and wreathing its body as men do their consciences; now, like its brother man, raising its little head as if exulting in its existence, sometimes proudly crawling forward, and sometimes meanly receding, or burrowing in the dirt.—Who is so blind that he cannot see in this detestable insect an image of himself? Who is so proud he will not claim it as a relation?

ACRAB.

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FOR THE WEEKLY VISITANT.

THE GHOSTLY CONFESSOR.

The Roman Catholic custom of confession originated from an intimate acquaintance wtih the world. It was founded on wisdom. Many people are thereby eased of an oppressive load, that would otherwise choke or strangle the most generous feelings of their hearts. Conscience is oftentimes troublesome. Nothing but the opiate of the CONFESSOR will sometimes mollify and assuage its twinges and convulsions. But in most confessions conscience has no share. Fine ladies, for instance, have frequent occasion for the assistance and friendly ear of a Ghostly Confessor, notwithstanding they are such unconscionable creatures. A solemn and rigid monk is absolutely requisite to the right management of their prudential concerns. He soothes their griefs, animates their drooping hopes, fixes a spirit of resolution in their tender bosoms, and supplies them with expedients. What would JULIET, that popular example of modest and discreet love, have done, without the aid and contrivances of her Ghostly Father? She would have been devoted by an unfeeling parent to eternal grief—and the lovely, amiable, and sentimental ROMEO, the flame of whose love, like the fire preserved by the vestal virgins, was divine, might perhaps either like COWPER'S KATE have become distracted, and

"*Beg'd an idle pin of all he met*,"

or in the frenzy of some evil moment, drank the "sweet potion" of death.

In this delightful season of the year, when all things are full of love and activity, and when youth and beauty are particularly apt to go astray, it seems proper something should be done to encourage virtue in her career, and to protect her against the arts and intrigues of deceivers. I have therefore determined to devote my time entirely to the service of the ladies, and those fine fellows who kneel down and worship them. My cell is a room provided by Mr. POOL, directly west of the tower of Dr. PRINCE'S meeting-house, where I may be seen at any time between the singing of the matin song, and the ringing of the bell for vespers. Those who have recourse to me are desired to banish all reserve—as they will be treated with the greatest tenderness, delicacy and confidence. This caution is designed chiefly for the ladies, for, in Protestant countries, I have observed they are curiously shy and retentive. A candid acknowledgment of secret sins, transient emotions, and vagrant wishes, will procure an immediate absolution and corrective. It is expected there will be an honorable emulation among the ladies, and those like ladies, of Salem and the vicinity; and that they will contend

strenuously who shall derive most advantage from this salutary and wholesome establishment, and who shall recommend themselves most effectually to the fatherly notice of

THE GHOSTLY CONFESSOR.

N.B. I reserve to myself the right of narrating cases, and publishing circumstances involved in them, when the public good requires; taking care always to avoid names and descriptive epithets. I shall soon issue a BULL against the reading of NOVELS and ROMANCES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE VISITANT.

SIR,

Hirax need not have dated his letter from his place of abode, to enable the public to determine who he is. His imbecility and malice, are as certain guides as his name itself would have been. The town affords no one who can any way be compared to him in these respects. He has always been remarkable for his envious, malignant temper, which has rendered him an object of contempt, to every man who values himself on opposite qualities.

I merely write this, sir, to inform you that I know him. Incapacity in itself is no proper object for ridicule; but when it is joined to a malevolent temper, it justly becomes a mark for contempt, and for this reason I shall take no further notice of such a snarling, contemptible, sneaking little puppy as Hirax. *I remain, &c.*

BARÇA.

LITERARY AMUSEMENT.

THE DAUGHTER,

OR

A MODERN ROMANCE.

[*Continued.*]

Horatio and Clarissa were united. But the chastity of her soul was painful to Horatio, who sought in a blushing grace a voluptuous Phryne. He turned from the dove-like softness of her eyes, to bask in the burning eye of a luxurious face, and was folded in the bought embrace of vagrant beauty. Clarissa looked on the guilty wanderer, to charm away his frowns, but his mind was not to be touched by the silent bliss of sentiment. His sultry soul suited with nocturnal horrors, and he hated the wife who was no prostitute!

Clarissa knew to suffer, but not to complain; there was a sublimity in her patience; and her griefs were noiseless as her tears. Accustomed to suffer, she lost not her first disposition to please.

The licentious manners of Horatio banished from his table those who could give a value, or a charm to society. Clarissa was insolated in her own house; without a confidant, without a protector, she beheld herself amidst a scene perpetually renewing itself, of tumultuous dissipation. Her father died, gazing on her splendour, and wondering why she was not happy.

Melville, the neighbour of Horatio, now returned from his travels. He had passed the dangerous period of life with little injury: for his intellect had expanded with his passions, and at a time when the mind only produces flowers, his concealed fruit. At the age of twenty-five he might be pronounced to be a man of experience. Able to reason, he preferred, however, the more facile enjoyment to feel; in the high tone of his feelings he did not think that even romantic virtue was a romance. His genius, with the enthusiasm of taste, exhausted itself in the pleasing arts of imagination, and their elegance gave an amenity to his manners, and a secret grace to an interesting form.

Is there an object more touching than a beautiful image of suffering virtue? Even beauty looks more beautiful in the langour of soft sorrows. With the short and simple story of Clarissa, Melville was not unacquainted; but when he gazed on her, how more penetrating was the sentiment of pity, and the sensation of the beautiful!

Her person at this time was peculiarly affecting. She still retained the loveliness of her happy days, become fainter indeed by subdued sorrow ; to Melville her beauty conveyed the emotion we feel at the lingering departure of a cherished object ; and her pathetic countenance seemed to say, I am beautiful, but I shall not long be beautiful ! Her eyes seemed at times as if they had wept, and her bosom heaved a protracted respiration, as if it suppressed a sigh. Her voice, ever the image of her sentiments, without complaining, yielded the tones of complaint ; and her broken spirit often scattered itself in faint blushes—the amiable colouring of Modesty and fear.

What a dangerous object for the sensible Melville ! He viewed with indignation the society which surrounded Clarissa, and, with horror, the tyrant who only appreciated the possession of such a woman among the rest of his opulent purchases. To relieve his own painful emotions, he resolved to soothe those of the object of his sympathy.

For the elegant and sorrowing mind, there are no enjoyments but those arts and studies which are not submited to the caprice of fortune ; these offer to a great soul an exercise for its higher passions, and render our domestic retreat a seat of quiet, when all without destroys our peace. Melville discovered in Clarissa his own tastes : Yes ! Nature had united their souls, and Fortune eternally divided them !

But while Clarissa gazed on the arts with rapture, could she forget the artist? Their situation every day became more interesting. When together, their eyes often beamed with a lustre which they had not in the presence of others. Often they gazed in silence on each other, till one, as if breaking from a reverie, seemed to awaken the other. Never did one glance alarm the confidence of virtue. Milton expresses this purity of mind,

——————No thought infirm
Alter'd their cheek——————

Clarissa, perceiving the interest she excited in Melville, considered every emotion he betrayed as an effusion of sympathy ; and to Melville every tender glance Clarissa bestowed on her friend was but the modest silence of gratitude.

A difference now took place in their situation ; for the same passion affected them differently. Clarissa from her earliest days had been a sufferer, and to love Melville was only to add another grief to many. Melville, on the contrary, was no pupil in the school of tender affliction, and he had never been a lover. The view of Clarissa became dangerous ; he loved, and he loved the wife of another ! He was even jealous of the caresses she bestowed on her husband !

His visits became less frequent, and often interrupted by long absence ; he talked of recommencing his travels ; a hundred times fixed the day of his departure, and that day always found him near Clarissa.

Melville reasoned ; but as his reasonings were those of an agitated mind, his virtue wandered, and he sometimes hesitated between the sensbility Nature inspired, and the deprivation duty enforced.

The sufferings of Clarissa were not inferior. She had observed with surprise Melville's frequent absences, and at first had felt them violations of that friendship her chaste heart had vowed. At the subjection of a father and the persecution of a husband, no murmur had escaped ; but at the broken friendship of Melville she felt a want in her heart, never to be elsewhere satisfied. Yet when her friend again returned after each absence, his affection seemed not diminished ; but when she had forgiven him, again his constancy was doubted, and again he left the beauteous sufferer to solitude and melancholy.

When they met, their embarrassments were mutual. Melville seemed desirous of communicating something ; often his gesture betrayed the fullness of his heart, and while placing himself in the attitude of one who is preparing to open some interesting affair, gazing on the softness of her eyes, his mind became disordered, and his accents faltered. Clarissa, lost in reverie, listened to the voice that had closed. Touched by his trembling hand, her hand too trembled. The tears in her averted eyes alarmed the ingenuousness of her soul. Ah ! exclaimed the virtuous Clarissa, I feel for this friend some-

thing more tender than friendship ; but in the consciousness of his virtue, is not mine secure ? Thus they loved without an avowal, and cherished the crime, yet were not criminal.

The sensitive frame of Clarissa wasted in silence ; her connubial duty contemned, struggling with a secret passion never to be gratified, produced a confirmed hectic, which often in a vermil softness exalted the langour of her face : "A celestial rosy red," a colour which Milton has given his angel, and calls "the proper hue of Love." Sometimes it is seen in the last stage of pining passion, tremulously flushing on a faded cheek. It was thus with Clarissa. As Melville sat by her, and perceived some little beauty passing away every hour, he felt as one who gazes on those softened tints of the parting day, which more delicately shine, and perish as they shine !

He now attributes the permanent traces of her griefs to the cruelty of Horatio's neglect. He thinks he has himself been deficient in consoling the unhappy beauty. More than once the name of Horatio escaped, but Claissa's eyes were lighted up by reproach, and she replied by a dignified silence.

[*To be continued.*]

SELECTED POETRY.

FOR THE WEEKLY VISITANT.

MR. POOL,

By inserting the following lines, *On the Influence of Example in forming the Characters of Men*, in your Weekly Visitant, you will oblige

A FEMALE FRIEND.

The purest joys which man can taste below,
From social intercourse and friendship flow.
The hermit *feels*, though loth the truth to *own*,
That *'tis not good for man to be alone.*
Even blissful Adam, Heaven's peculiar care,
Sigh'd for a mate his happiness to share ;
Heaven pitying heard, and bid him cease to grieve,
And for one rib exchang'd the beauteous Eve.
To every rank the principle extends,
Each individual knows his faithful friends ;
When joy expands or grief distracts his heart,
These share his bliss, or kind relief impart ;
For grief divided loses half its weight,
But joys when shar'd, still greater joys create.
Hence social circles through the world abound,
Hence scarce a friendless wretch on earth is found.
But man, to imitate by nature prone,
From others manners ever forms his own.
When from the distant woods the rough-hewn clown,
With many an awkward stare is brought to town,
At first he gazes round with wondering eyes ;
Here palaces and gilded spires arise ;
There unaccustomed sounds his ear invade,
By noisy crowds and rattling coaches made :
The jostling throngs that on each other press ;
Their unfelt compliments ; their brilliant dress ;
Their pert vivacious look ; their strutting gait ;
And all the splendid vanities of state,
Strike the untutor'd lad with sad surprize ;
He stares, and gapes, and scarce believes his eyes.
But soon each object is familiar grown ;
He soon becomes accustom'd to the town ;

Approves those manners which at first seem'd odd;
Assumes the cit and lays aside the clod;
Improves his air, refines his taste and wit,
And imperceptibly becomes polite.
But not to manners only is confin'd
Example's mighty influence on mankind;
We think and act, we speak, we joy and grieve,
Detest and love, like those with whom we live.
Those crimes, which shock at first, no more offend,
Seen oft, and through the medium of a friend,
His vices first look hideous, and we hate,
Indulge them next, then love, then imitate.
Then, since on virtue happiness depends,
And both together on the choice of friends,
Thrice bless'd are they who only such obtain,
Whose passions yield to reason's gentle reign;
Whose morals, piety and learning join
To mend the heart, the manners to refine,
Whose pure accomplices, with resistless power,
Allure their devious feet to wisdom's bower,
Who every virtue, every grace display;
Who point the road to Heaven, and lead the way.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The danger of incorrect punctuation.

Carden relates, that Martin, the abbot of Asello, in Italy, caused this inscription to be put over the gate of his abbey:

"*Porta, patens esto, nulli claudaris honesto.*"

"*Gate be thou open, and not shut to any honest man.*"

The painter, however, by incorrectly placing the comma after the word *nulli* instead of *esto*,

("*Porta patens esto nulli, claudaris honesto*")

gave it this meaning:

"*Gate be thou open to no one, but shut even to an honest man.*"

A pope passing the abbey, was so disgusted at the harshness of this inscription, that he immediately deposed the abbot.

An anonymous writer relates this anecdote:—The unfortunate Edward II. lost his life by his queen wilfully misplacing a comma in a note she sent to the keeper of the prison, where he was confined. It was this:

"*To shed King Edward's blood refuse to fear, I count it good.*"

Had the comma been placed after the word refuse,

("*To shed King Edward's blood refuse, to fear I count it good.*")

it would have been a command to the keeper not to hurt the king; but the jailor understanding the queen's note as it was written, the wretched sovereign lost his life.

Depravity.—If we consider the present state of the world, it will be found that all confidence is lost among mankind, that no man ventures to act, where money can be endangered, upon the faith of another. It is impossible to see the long scrolls in which every contract is included, with all their appendages of seals and attestations, without wondering at the depravity of those beings, who must be restrained from violation of promise by such formal and public evidences, and precluded from equivocation and subterfuge by such punctilious minuteness. Among all the satires to which folly and wickedness have given occasion, none is equally severe with a bond or a settlement. [*London publication.*

RESPECT FOR THE DEAD.

On entering the Church-yard at the little town of Llanwair, in Wales, I was particularly struck with the remarkable custom that prevails over the nothern parts of that country, of planting the graves of departed friends with various evergreens, and all the choicest gifts of Flora's hand. Box, thrift, and other plants fit for edging, are planted round in the shape of the grave. for a border, and every flower that adorns the smart parterre is placed within, so that the taste of the living may here be known by the manner of embellishing these mansions of the dead. The snow-drop, violet, and primrose denote the infant dust ; the rocket, rose, and woodbine show maturer years ; while tansey, rue, and starwort mark declining life. Each has his little evergreen, fond emblem of that perenial state where change is known no more. Nor are they, when once planted, left to be overrun by the luxuriancy of less delicate neighbors, but constantly weeded and cherished by the hands of the nearest friends of the deceased, who appropriate every Saturday afternoon for that pious remembrance of departed worth. [*Pratt.*

An awful instance of divine correction, of a nature which cannot fail to be admonitorially applied by all who hear it, was experienced by a young man in Stamford, (Connecticut,) on the 14th ult. Whilst giving reins to the vehemence of his passion, and impiously uttering the most blasphemous expressions, he was, by the visitation of Providence, suddenly struck dumb ! Under this affliction, and in a state of mind, from remorse and contrition the most deplorable, the unhappy young man has remained, ever since his intemperate and wicked behavior, under the affliction of this signal mark of divine displeasure. [*N. Y. Gaz.*

DEATHS.

At Boxford, Major Asa Perley, æt. 90 ; an active officer in the American revolution. His descendants are numerous.

At Danvers, Mrs. Sally Low, wife of Mr. Stephen L. æt. 35.

In this town, Capt. Thorndike Deland, æt. 54. Mrs. Ame Howard, wife of Mr. John H. æt. 69.

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

It is our wish, and it shall be our endeavor, to render impartial justice to every one who may favor us with their communications ; but we wish to avoid every species of personal crimination and recrimination, as it too often generates quarrels, without being productive of any good. We must, therefore apologize to our readers, for the insertion of the communication signed Hirax, *in the last Visitant ; but as we had given it to the public, we could not with justice deny* Barca *the privilege of retaliating in the same public manner. In future, however, we shall not admit any personalities ; and as* Hirax *has not divested himself of these in his continuation of the subject, we must decline publishing it. If he will confine his observations to the subject, without reflecting upon the author, we will cheerfully publish his communications, and thank him for his correspondence.*

If "Somebody" *will take the trouble to look again into the last Visitant, he will find the scrap he alludes to was selected.*

Ann Goodintent *to* Tim Consideration, *was received too late to appear this evening. We presume her passion cannot suffer much from a delay of one week, especially if the thermometer continues below the freezing point.*

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Directly west of the Tower of Dr. Prince's Meeting-House.

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